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ABSTRACT

Selected attitudinal and value characteristics of high and low successful consultants were considered. Consultants (N=12) and consultees (N=15) completed six measures. Consultants were categorized as high or low success of consultants based on the coding of consultants' logs. Results indicate that high and low success consultants do not differ on the selected characteristics, and more successful consultants have consultees who are more authoritarian and dogmatic and are more dissimilar to their consultees in level of dogmatism and reported need for assistance. (Author) in level of dogmatism and reported need for assistance. (Author)

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Attitudes/Values of Consultant and Consultee in Mental Health Consultation

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Abstract

Selected attitudinal and value characteristics of high and low successful consultants were considered. Twelve consultants and 15 consultees completed six measures. Consultants were categorized as high or low success consultants based on the coding of consultants' logs. Results indicate high and low success consultants do not differ on the selected characteristics. Also, the results indicate that more successful consultants have consultees who are more authoritarian and dogmatic and are more dissimilar to their consultees in level of dogmatism and reported need for assistance. Future investigations will indicate whether the results can be replicated on a more representative consultee sample.

Attitudes/Values of Consultant and Consultee in Mental Health Consultation

Although consultation is a major professional activity among human service professionals, research on its effectiveness is minimal. Recently there has been more research and more sophisticated research in this area. Most of the research on consultation outcomes focuses on the achievement of consultation goals, and the investigators attempt to answer the global question: "Is consultation effective?" In general, the recent research provides some support for consultation, as the reviews of Alpert (1976) and Mannino and Shore (1975) indicate.

The purpose of the present paper is to further the understanding of consultation outcomes by considering more specific questions related to success in consultation. Several investigators have indicated the need for such work (Mannino & Shore, 1970; Meyers, Pitt, Gaughan, & Freidman, 1978). In the present study, the focus is on individual characteristics related to success in consultation. Specifically, the following three questions guided the designing of the present study: (a) Are selected characteristics of high and low success consultants different? (b) Are selected characteristics of the consultees of high and low success consultants different? (c) Is the level of similarity between the consultant and his/her consultee different with high and low success consultants?

Although several mental health professionals have considered consultant and consultee characteristics which facilitate the consultation process (Eisdorfer & Batton, 1972; Erickson, 1966; Goldman & Cowan, 1976; Kline & Cummings, 1955; Mannino, 1969; Robbins & Spencer, 1968; Silverman, 1974), the empirical work is sparse. Further, the present investigators could find no empirical studies in which successful consultation was related to the level of similarity between the consultant and his/her consultee. The relative lack of prior research in this area led to a consideration of consultant and consultee characteristics based on consultation theory and the investigators' experience as a consultant and/or supervisor to consultants. In the present study the following six attitudinal/value characteristics were related to success in consultation: educational values, need for assistance, locus of control, authoritarianism, dogmatism, and conservatism. A major expectation was that consultation would be more successful when the attitudes and values between the consultant and his/her consultee were similar. In addition, it was expected that in contrast to those who did not experience consultation goal attainment, successful consultants and their consultees would be high in internal locus of control and would be low in authoritarianism, dogmatism, and conservatism.

Method

Research Participants

Research participants were 12 student consultants enrolled in a year-long graduate school consultation course during the year 1974-75 or 1975-76

and the 15 consultees (recipients of consultation) with whom they worked. There were a total of 24 consultant-consultee pairs, since seven of the consultants and eight of the consultees worked with more than one consultee or consultant respectively over the two year period.

The 12 consultants were certificate or doctoral matriculants in a school psychology program, and were in the equivalent of their second or third year of training. All consultants had teaching or other field work experience in school prior to the course. The consultants consulted in a school one-half day a week for one academic year for purposes of training and service. Ten consultants worked in Catholic elementary schools. The remaining two consulted in a day care center. The model of consultation is described by Sarason, Levine, Goldenberg, Cherlin, and Bennett (1966) and is, in general, case-centered.

All consultees were volunteer participants in the mental health consultation program. The 15 consultees included two principals and ten teachers of Catholic elementary schools, and three teachers in a day care center. Eight consultees, all teachers, were not members of religious orders.

Procedure

Consultees were told that the purpose of the study was to learn more about factors associated with successful consultation. They were told that a coding system would be utilized, and therefore their responses would be anonymous. All consultees who could be located agreed to serve as research participants.

For purposes of assessment of the independent measures, consultees were mailed two sets of questionnaires to complete individually and to return by mail. When the first questionnaire was returned, the second was sent. Although consultees were encouraged to return questionnaires within two weeks, few did and additional contact was made. Thus, time between completion of the two questionnaires ranged from two to eight weeks. The six scales are listed under measures.

For purposes of assessment of the independent measure, there was coding of detailed logs which were maintained weekly by the consultants for supervisory purposes. As consultants were graded on richness of conceptualization rather than success of intervention, these logs are relatively objective and thorough. The scoring system for the logs is described below. Training for scoring the logs preceded coding, and an inter-rater agreement of 82% was established on three consecutive trials by the two graduate student coders. The coding was blind, as code numbers identifying consultants were used.

Measures

Educational Values Assessment Questionnaire. This instrument can be used to assess educational values and consists of 80 activities that are to be rated on a 7-point scale from (1) no importance to (7) greatest importance to the education of a child (Gottesfeld, 1973). A factor analysis, based on a sample of 400 mid-Manhattan parents and teachers revealed eight factors with internal consistency ranging from .87 to .96 on the teacher

subsample. The eight factors are: (a) community involvement; (b) strictness/standards; (c) professional specialists; (d) innovation; (e) health, recreation, and practical training; (f) economic considerations; (g) parent education; and (h) special handling of difficult children. Total and factor scores range from 80 to 560 and 10 to 70, respectively.

Need for Assistance Scale. This instrument can be used to identify the degree that school personnel report that they need help in managing various problem situations concerning pupils in a classroom and consists of 50 problems to be rated on a 5-point scale from (1) never to (5) every time should seek assistance from appropriately qualified personnel. The problem situations concern curriculum, discipline, motivation, and physical and mental health. The scale which was developed by Iscoe (1967) has face validity. Scores range from 50 to 250.

Rotter Locus of Control Scale. The 29-item forced-choice questionnaire has six filler items. Each item consists of a pair of statements, one implying that life events are unpredictable or under the control of others (external control) and the other implying one can have influence over outcomes of situations (internal control). Item analysis and factor analysis indicate reasonably high internal consistency for an additive scale (Rotter, 1966), and construct validity is indicated (Joe, 1971; Lefcourt, 1966; Rotter, 1966). Items are scored for externality of control (1) or internality of control (0), and scores range from 0 (extremely internal) to 23 (extremely external).

California F Scale. This instrument, which can be used to assess authoritarianism, consists of 30 items that are to be rated on a 7-point scale from agree very strongly (+3) to disagree very strongly (-3) (Adorno, Frenkel-Brunswik, Levinson, Sanford, & Nevitt, 1950). There is much research regarding the validity of the F Scale, as Kirscht and Dillehay's (1967) review indicates. The bulk of the literature seems to support Christie's conclusion (1954, p. 19) that the F scale appears to have at least a moderate amount of construct validity.

Dogmatism Scale. This instrument, which can be used to measure openness-closedness of cognitive systems, authoritarianism, and intolerance, consists of 40 statements that are to be rated on a 7-point scale from agree very strongly (+3) to disagree very strongly (-3). Reliability ranges from .68 to .93, and support for the scale as a general measure of authoritarianism and intolerance is indicated (Rokeach, 1960). Scores range from 40 to 280.

Conservatism Scale. This instrument consists of 16 statements that are to be rated on a 7-point scale from agree very strongly (+3) to disagree very strongly (-3). The instrument assesses level of conservative attitudes toward religion, politics, economics, education, and the duties and rights of individuals in society (Kerlinger, 1970). Reliability is .79, based on a sample of 168 college students (Robinson, Rusk, & Head, 1968). Scores range from 16 (low conservative) to 112 (high conservative).

Scoring System for Logs

All 24 consultant-consultee relations were coded for the dependent

measure, success in consultation by means of the logs. There are three components of success, and each of the three components was rated on a 3-point rating scale: (1) none; (2) some; (3) many. The three components are:

1. Change in consultant's perception of issues or problems discussed with consultant. From the consultant's point of view the consultee is more appropriately perceiving (none, some, many) of the issues or problems that they have discussed (i.e., the consultee has relabelled or reinterpreted (none, some, many) of the problems or issues in such a way that they are seen as being within her level of competence).

2. Change in consultee's behavior in regard to issues or problems discussed with consultant. From the consultant's point of view the consultee is more appropriately dealing with (none, some, many) of the issues or problems that have been discussed with the consultant.

3. Change in client's behavior in regard to issues or problems discussed by consultant and consultee. From the consultant's point of view, (none, some, many) of the clients who were discussed by the consultant and consultee are behaving more appropriately in regard to the issue or problem discussed.

A more detailed coding manual which includes examples and operational definitions of the three levels by component is available.

Results

Descriptive data is presented in Table 1. As indicated in this table,

consultees in the present study are more authoritarian, dogmatic, and conservative than the sample of consultants.

Insert Table 1 about here

For purposes of analysis, consultants were categorized as (1) high success or (2) low success consultants on the basis of their total success scores. The total means success scores was used for those consultants who worked with more than one consultee from the consultee sample. Total success scores range from 9 (high success) to 3 (low success). The range in success scores of high and low success consultants is 9-6 ($\bar{X}$ = 6.5, SD = 1.2) and 5-3 ($\bar{X}$ = 3.8, SD = 1.0).

Means and standard deviations for high and low success consultants are presented in Table 2 for each of the six independent variables.

Insert Table 2 about here

In order to determine whether high and low success consultants differ on the six characteristics, independent t tests were done. Results presented in Table 2 indicate that high and low success consultants do not differ in level of educational value, need for assistance, locus of control, authoritarianism, dogmatism, or conservatism. Further analysis of the educational values variable indicate that high and low success consultants differ in the

level of importance they assign to only one of the eight factors (handling difficult children). In contrast to low success consultants, high success consultants indicate of lower importance to the education of a child the handling of difficult children, t (10) = 2.34, $p < .05$.

Means and standard deviations for the consultees of the high and low success consultants are presented in Table 3 for each of the six consultee characteristics.

Insert Table 3 about here

In order to determine whether the consultees of high and low success consultants differ on the six characteristics, independent t tests were done. Results presented in Table 3 indicate that in contrast to the consultees of low success consultants, the consultees of high success consultants have higher authoritarianism and dogmatism scores. Also, results presented in this table indicate no difference between the consultees of high and low success consultants on educational values, need for assistance, locus of control, and conservatism. Further analysis of educational values indicates that the consultees of high and low success consultants do not differ in the level of importance they assign to each of the eight factors.

Lastly, means and standard deviations of the absolute difference between the score of consultant and his/her consultee for both high and low success consultants and for each of the six characteristics are presented in Table 4.

Insert Table 4 about here

In order to determine whether high and low success consultants differ with respect to amount of similarity to their consultee, independent t tests were done between high and low success consultants on the absolute difference between the scores of consultants and their consultees. Results presented in Table 4 indicate that in constrast to low success consultants, the absolute difference between the scores of consultant and his/her consultee is greater for high than for low success consultants for both need for assistance and dogmatism. Other differences were not indicated. Thus, Table 4 supports that high success consultants are more different from their consultees than low success consultants with respect to reported frequency that one should seek assistance from appropriately qualified personnel and level of dogmatism.

Discussion

The data indicate that high and low success consultants do not differ in the selected six attitude/value characteristics. The consultees of more successful consultants, however, are more authoritarian and more dogmatic than the consultees of less successful consultants. Lastly, the results indicate that in contrast to less successful consultants, more successful consultants are more dissimilar to their consultees in level of dogmatism and reported frequency that one should seek assistance from appropriately

qualified personnel. The findings concerning the characteristics of consultant, consultee, and consultant-consultee pair will be discussed following a consideration of the sample.

In the present study, the sample of consultants and consultees is low and high, respectively, in both authoritarianism and dogmatism. Rokeach (1960), for example, reports mean low and high authoritarianism scores for New York nonbelievers and New York Catholics as 93.7 and 105.2, respectively, and mean low and high dogmatism scores for these two groups as 147.2 and 147.4, respectively. As Table 1 indicates, the mean scores for consultants on authoritarianism and dogmatism is low ($\bar{X}$ = 72.00, SD = 16.25; $\bar{X}$ = 126.83, SD = 18.42, respectively), indicating less authoritarianism and less dogmatism than the sample of New York nonbelievers. Also, the mean scores for the consultees on authoritarianism and dogmatism is high ($\bar{X}$ = 125.67, SD = 24.69; $\bar{X}$ = 161.07, SD = 28.56, respectively), indicating more authoritarianism and more dogmatism than the sample of New York Catholics. Although there are no available norms for the conservatism scale, a consideration of the range of scores on this scale (16 to 112) indicates that the consultants are relatively low on the scale ($\bar{X}$ = 37.67, SD = 10.50), while the consultees are higher ($\bar{X}$ = 65.40, SD = 13.69). The findings in the present study must be considered in light of these sample characteristics. It is likely that the consultants in the present study are similar to many new consultants while the consultees, 47% of whom were members of religious orders, are not representative of all consultees.

The first major finding concerns the consultant characteristics and the similarity between high and low success consultants on the selected characteristics. There is little, if any, research identifying personal characteristics of successful consultants. The little available research focuses on what various groups, such as consultants or consultees, identify as characteristics which facilitate the consultation process. Such traits as permissiveness (Erickson, 1966) and likeable (Robbins & Spencer, 1968; Silverman, 1974) have been noted. Also noted are the conflicting abilities of (a) establishing equality (Caplan, 1970), and (b) authority status (Gaup, 1966) in the relationship. Some of these variables are somewhat related to those considered in the present study (permissiveness with dogmatism; ability to establish equality or authority status in the relationship with authority). The results of the present study suggest, however, that these variables may not be important in all consultative relationships, as some consultants and consultees believe.

The second major finding concerns the consultees' characteristics, and the dissimilarity in authoritarianism and dogmatism between the consultees of high and low success consultants. Contrary to our expectations, the results of the present study indicate that the more authoritarian and more dogmatic consultees are able to make better use of consultation than others. Since the sample of consultees is high in both authoritarianism and dogmatism, it appears that consultation success is greatest with consultees who are extremely high in these dimensions. Those consultees high in authoritarianism

and dogmatism may submit to the expertise of the consultant, and this submission may result in greater utilization of and success with consultation. With a less authoritarian and dogmatic sample, however, it may be the least authoritarian and dogmatic who profit most from consultation. Since the present study did not concern such a sample, it is speculation. The findings that the consultees of high and low success consultants did not differ in educational values, need for assistance, locus of control, and conservatism is less surprising in light of the rationale for the study and the sample. That is, educational values and need for assistance were introduced in the study for purposes of considering level of similarity between consultant-consultee pairs. Lastly, the range in locus of control and conservatism scores is relatively small in the present consultee sample, and may account for the discrepancy between the results of the present study and Kline and Cummings' (1955) concerning conservatism.

The third major finding concerns the level of similarity of characteristics between the consultant-consultee pair. The most surprising finding of the study is that in contrast to low success consultants, high success consultants are more different from their consultees with respect to reported need for assistance and level of dogmatism. Regarding need for assistance, it may be that in contrast to the low success consultants, the high success consultants who reported that expert assistance should be sought more frequently communicated greater willingness to provide this expert assistance, even though their consultees felt less need for such assistance. Regarding

dogmatism, it appears that the most open and tolerant consultants can work best with those who are least dogmatic. The data in the present study are perplexing and indicate that "opposites attract" on these two dimensions, or at least that those consultative pairs who are most different on need for assistance and dogmatism experience most success. Future investigations will indicate whether these results can be replicated on a more representative consultee sample.

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Footnote

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Table 1

Means and Standard Deviations, and Independent *t* Values for Differences Between Consultants and Consultees

Characteristics	Consultants (N = 12)	Consultees (N = 15)	*t*
Educational Values[a]			
Mean	330.00	360.75	1.63
SD	50.75	50.91	
Need for Assistance[b]			
Mean	152.00	144.73	0.84
SD	24.71	20.51	
Locus of Control[c]			
Mean	8.64	9.57	0.64
SD	4.34	2.90	
Authoritarianism[d]			
Mean	72.00	125.67	6.48***
SD	16.25	24.69	
Dogmatism[d]			
Mean	126.83	161.07	3.86***
SD	18.42	25.86	
Conservatism[d]			
Mean	37.67	65.40	5.78***
SD	10.50	13.69	

[a]The higher the mean, the higher the activities are judged to be of importance to the education of a child.

[b]The higher the mean, the more frequently assistance is judged necessary.

[c]The higher the mean, the more external the score.

[d]The higher the mean, the higher the score on that variable.

***$p < .001$

Table 2

Means and Standard Deviations, and Independent t Values for Differences Between High and Low Success Consultants in Consultant Characteristics

Consultant Characteristics	Consultants: High Success (N = 6)	Consultants: Low Success (N = 6)	t
Educational Values[a]			
Mean	330.98	320.02	0.57
SD	50.63	60.23	
Need for Assistance[b]			
Mean	159.00	145.00	0.98
SD	29.16	19.39	
Locus of Control[c]			
Mean	9.00	8.20	0.31
SD	4.29	4.87	
Authoritarianism[d]			
Mean	68.83	75.17	0.66
SD	10.63	21.08	
Dogmatism[d]			
Mean	124.16	129.50	1.00
SD	16.73	21.21	
Conservatism[d]			
Mean	40.33	35.00	0.87
SD	9.99	11.21	

[a]The higher the mean, the higher the activities are judged to be of importance to the education of a child.

[b]The higher the mean, the more frequently assistance is judged necessary.

[c]The higher the mean, the more external the score.

[d]The higher the mean, the higher the score on that variable.

Table 3

Means and Standard Deviations, and Independent t Values for Differences Between High and Low Success Consultants in Consultee Characteristics

Consultee Characteristics	Consultants: High Success (N = 6)	Consultants: Low Success (N = 6)	t
Educational Values[a]			
Mean	360.83	350.33	-0.11
SD	60.44	40.29	
Need for Assistance[b]			
Mean	143.46	146.08	0.35
SD	14.95	22.38	
Locus of Control[c]			
Mean	10.20	8.30	1.75
SD	2.78	2.24	
Authoritarianism[d]			
Mean	139.27	121.83	2.08*
SD	21.42	20.09	
Dogmatism[d]			
Mean	175.42	151.69	3.05**
SD	18.31	20.42	
Conservatism[d]			
Mean	69.90	63.17	1.54
SD	11.87	8.98	

[a]The higher the mean, the higher the activities are judged to be of importance to the education of a child.

[b]The higher the mean, the more frequently assistance is judged necessary.

[c]The higher the mean, the more external the score.

[d]The higher the mean, the higher the score on that variable.

*$p < .05$

**$p < .01$

Table 4

Means and Standard Deviations, and Independent t Values for Differences Between High and Low Success Consultants in Consultant-Consultee Pair Absolute Difference Scores

Consultant Characteristics	Consultants: High Success (N = 6)	Consultants: Low Success (N = 6)	t
Educational Values			
Mean	70.05	50.10	0.91
SD	50.65	40.87	
Need for Assistance			
Mean	37.15	19.42	2.30*
SD	37.15	14.79	
Locus of Control			
Mean	4.00	3.90	0.84
SD	2.67	2.87	
Authoritarianism			
Mean	67.36	52.33	1.45
SD	24.49	25.09	
Dogmatism			
Mean	50.58	28.25	3.05**
SD	19.18	16.65	
Conservatism			
Mean	28.64	31.58	0.56
SD	14.55	9.88	

Note. The greater the mean score, the greater the mean discrepancy between consultant-consultee pairs.

*$p < .05$

**$p < .01$